(ii) Decrease in Customs Duty for import of carpet grade wool to 10%.

(iii) Concessional rate of import duty at 10% on report of woollen machinery required for modernisation.

(iv) Specific projects are taken up for research and development through Wool Research Association.

(v) Testing facilities have been provided at important locations.

(vi) Through Wool & Woollen Export Promotion Council, the industry participates in international trade fairs and exhibitions.

(vii) The proposed Technological Upgradation Fund would cover Weaving and Processing sector of the woollen textile industry.

(viii) NIFT has created a Knitwear Design Centre for development of fashions on international level.

(ix) Various development schemes are implemented through Central Wool Development Board for improvement of Wool Sector.

Ban on Production of Items in Powerloom Sector

2626. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has banned the production of 22 types of cloth items on powerloom;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government are aware about the loss of employment because of such decision;

(d) the steps taken by Government to protect the interest of the workers;

(e) whether Government are also aware about the closure of the powerloom units in Bhagalpur, in Bihar; and

(f) if so, the details regarding the assistance provided to the workers?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) and (b) government has not banned any cloth to be produced on powerlooms. However, vide its order No. SO-557(E) dated July 26, 1996, the Ministry of Textiles reserved 11 articles of textiles for exclusive production by handloom sector under Sub-Section (1) of Section 3 of the Handloom (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act, 1985. This has been done to protect the interests of handloom weavers.

(c) and (d) There is no information about loss of employment as a result of that order.

(e) and (f) There is no report about closure of powerloom industry at Bhagalpur.

Incentive to Sericulture Farmers of Orissa

2627. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a vast scope for increasing areas under sericulture in Orissa;

(b) if so, the possibility explored in this regard during the last five years;

(c) the incentives granted to the farmers to grow silk in that state; and

(d) the details of the areas in that state where sericulture has been started?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) to (c) Orissa State produces three varieties of silk. It is the second largest producer of Tasar silk in the country. A small quantity of Mulberry and Eri silk is also produced. In order to supplement the efforts of the State Government for development of sericulture industry in Orissa the Central Silk Board (CSB) has established various research/research extension units besides implementing